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**U.S. ATTORNEY CHARGES LEADER OF MEXICAN FEDERATION OF
COCAINE CARTELS**

DAVID N. KELLEY, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, ANTHONY PLACIDO, the Special Agent in Charge of the New York Field Division of the Drug Enforcement Administration ("DEA"), RAYMOND W. KELLY, Commissioner of the New York City Police Department ("NYPD"), MARTIN FICKE, the Special Agent in Charge of the Department of Homeland Security, Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE") in New York, and WAYNE E. BENNETT, the Superintendent of the New York State Police ("NYSP"), announced today that IGNACIO CORONEL VILLAREAL, a/k/a "Nacho Coronel," one of the top leaders of a group of Mexican cocaine cartels known as the "Mexican Federation," has been charged in Manhattan federal court with conspiring to import tens of thousands of kilograms of cocaine into the United States.

According to the Indictment unsealed today, as one of the leaders of the Mexican Federation, CORONEL VILLAREAL was

responsible for transporting ton-quantities of Colombian cocaine into the United States for distribution. CORONEL VILLAREAL also allegedly oversaw the laundering of the cocaine proceeds from the United States to Mexico and Colombia. Cocaine shipments, often consisting of several tons of cocaine, were allegedly transported to the waters off Mexico and Central America by vessels controlled by the Mexican Federation's Colombian suppliers. At pre-arranged locations on the high seas, the Colombian vessels then allegedly met with vessels controlled by the Mexican Federation, which received the cocaine shipments and transported them to the Mexican mainland. From Mexico, the cocaine shipments were allegedly received and stored by CORONEL VILLAREAL and his criminal organization. It is alleged CORONEL VILLAREAL then arranged to transport the drugs by tractor-trailer, tanker truck, or other ground conveyances, into the United States for distribution in U.S. cities.

As alleged in the Indictment, CORONEL VILLAREAL, oversaw all of the cocaine-importation activities of the Mexican Federation, coordinated and planned cocaine shipments with other leaders of the Mexican Federation, and negotiated with the Mexican Federation's Colombian suppliers for the purchase of ton-quantities of cocaine.

The Indictment also alleges that CORONEL VILLAREAL has generated at least \$1 billion of cocaine proceeds from the drug shipments that he imported into the United States.

If convicted of all charges, CORONEL VILLAREAL faces a

maximum sentence of life imprisonment.

Mr. KELLEY praised the investigative efforts of the DEA, the NYPD, ICE, and the NYSP, and expressed his appreciation for the assistance of the Department of Justice's Narcotics and Dangerous Drug Section in the investigation of the case.

Assistant United States Attorneys ERIC SNYDER and ANIRUDH BANSAL are in charge of the prosecution.

The charges contained in the Indictment are merely accusations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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